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NSC BRIEFING

24 JANUARY 1956

INDONESIA

- I. Coalition cabinet in Indonesia, led by moderate Masjumi Premier Harahap, is presently putting on brave front but its life-expectancy grows poorer daily.
- A. 25X6
- B. Vote of confidence could be called for at any time.
- II. Cabinet's brave front followed near-disastrous withdrawal of two Moslem parties from coalition, thereby reducing Government's nominal majority in lame-duck parliament to 23 seats.
- A. Vacancies caused by withdrawal of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Islamic League (PSII) have been filled from cabinet's own ranks.
- B. Cabinet has refused to resign.
- C. Despite earlier reports that negotiations with Dutch--issue which sparked present crisis--would be broken off, cabinet has announced talks will be continued.
- III. Masjumi success in staving off immediate collapse is hollow victory, however.
- A. Masjumi now finds itself isolated from NU, Indonesia's only other major Moslem party.
- B. In consequence, Masjumi may not even be included in next government (to be formed after seating of new parliament, probably in April).

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- C. Meanwhile, cabinet's day-to-day survival depends on doubtful loyalty of numerous small parties in government coalition who hold 23-seat margin of safety against opposition no-confidence vote.
 - D. Worst of all, from long-range viewpoint, Masjumi itself showing signs of rupture.
- IV. Newest evidence of disunity within Masjumi--which is more a loose federation than a unified, disciplined political party--came on 24 Jan when Masjumi deputy chairman and leader of conservative wing, Sukiman, told press he regarded negotiations with Dutch a "national tragedy," opposed their continuation.

25X6

- V. Whatever the outcome in immediate future, chances of eventual Communist participation in Indonesian government may be improving.
- A. Executive Committee of National Party (PNI - leader of opposition and plurality winner in '55 elections) has reportedly voted for coalition in future cabinet including NU, PSII and Communists.
 - B. Possible stumbling-block for leftists is position of NU. Should this now major Moslem group (third in '55 voting) reach some arrangement with Masjumi, or some Masjumi fragment (like Sukiman's), conservative forces would be strengthened.
 - C. If not, and NU continues to permit itself to be used as instrument of Sukarno, we can expect to see further trend to left in Indonesia.

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25 JANUARY 1956

INDONESIA

I. Coalition cabinet in Indonesia, led by moderate Masjumi Premier Harahap, is presently putting on brave front but its life-expectancy is poor.

A. 

B. Vote of confidence could be called for at any time.

II. Cabinet's brave front followed withdrawal of two Moslem parties from coalition (19 Jan)--action which reduced Government's nominal majority in lame-duck parliament to 23 seats.

A. Cabinet nonetheless refused to resign.

B. Filled from own ranks those cabinet vacancies caused by withdrawal of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Islamic League (PSII).

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25X6

- C. Despite earlier reports that negotiations with Dutch--issue which sparked present crisis--would be broken off, announced that talks will be continued.

III. Masjumi success in staving off immediate collapse is minor victory, however,

- A. Masjumi now well on way to being isolated from NU, Indonesia's only other major Moslem party.
- B. In consequence, efforts to effect Masjumi-NU collaboration in new government will be considerably more difficult.
- C. Masjumi might even find itself excluded from next cabinet (to be formed after seating of new parliament, probably in April).
- D. Meanwhile, cabinet's survival depends on loyalty of numerous small parties in government coalition, several of which are unreliable.
- E. Moreover, Masjumi itself showing signs

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IV. Newest evidence of disunity within Masjumi
--more of a loose federation than unified,
disciplined political party--came on 24 Jan
when Masjumi deputy chairman and leader of
conservative wing, Sukiman took issue with
party chairman Natsir and told press he re-
garded negotiations with Dutch a "national
tragedy," opposed their continuation.

V. Whatever the immediate outcome chances of
eventual Communist participation in Indo-
nesian government may be improving.

A. Executive Committee of National Party
(PNI - leader of opposition and
plurality winner in '55 elections) has
reportedly voted for coalition in

with NU, PSI and

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B. Possible stumbling-block for leftists
is still unsettled position of NU.

Should this newly important Moslem
group (third in '55 voting) reach some
arrangement with Masjumi, conservative
forces would be strengthened.

1. NU leaders claim they still want
to work with Masjumi; younger
elements in NU reportedly are
concerned over split in Moslem
unity and consequent Communist gains.

C. Unless working agreement can be arranged
between NU and Masjumi, however, we can
expect to see further trend to left
in Indonesia.